



MEETING OF THE NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

Date: Friday, 17 July 2026

Invitees

Name	Role	Organisation
Board Members		
Chris Hickey	Chair	Mercury Hampton
David Baines MP	Member of Parliament, St Helens North	Member of Parliament, St Helens North
Natalie Carroll (maternity cover for Amie Parsonage)	Portfolio and Partnerships Officer	Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner
Ian Lewis	Investment Manager	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Community & Co-Opted Board Members		
Alex Myhill	Community Representative	Willow & Ram
Joanne Edge	Community Representative	Newton Sports Club
Debbie Taylor	Business Representative	Es Paradis Salon & Domestic Abuse WA12 CIC
Paul Romanko	Business Representative	United Utilities Water Ltd
Fiona Ruddy	Third Sector Representative	Newton Community Centre
John Unsworth	Cultural, Arts, and Heritage including Sports Groups Representative	Sea Cadet Corps
Rev Chris Stafford	Faith Representative	Team Rector at St Peters, Emmanuel Wargrave, and St John's
Catherine Twist	Education and Opportunity Representative	Independent Member for Admissions and Exclusion appeal in St Helens
Claire Glover	Health and Wellbeing Representative	Operations Manager at St Helens Wellbeing Service (CHCP)
Local Authority Representatives		
Mary Jefferson	Head of Regeneration & Growth	St Helens Borough Council
Matthew Valentine	Programme Lead	St Helens Borough Council
Rachel Bebb	Project Officer	St Helens Borough Council
Glenn Taggart	Programme Manager	St Helens Borough Council
Donna Wilby	Finance Business Partner - Regeneration	St Helens Borough Council
Apologies Received		
Mark Palethorpe	Chief Executive	St Helens Borough Council
Councillor George Woodward	Leader of the Council	St Helens Borough Council
Jon Julian Smith	Chief Inspector, St Helens	Merseyside Police



MEETING OF THE NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

Friday, 17 July 2026

AGENDA

Item	Title	Lead
1.	Welcome and Introductions	CH
2.	Declarations of Interest	CH
3.	Minutes of the previous Neighbourhood Board meeting held on 24 April 2026	CH
4.	Change in Board Membership	MV
5.	Community Pot Outcomes	MV
6.	Building Improvement Programme	MV
7.	Early Delivery Projects Update	MV
8.	Staffing Update	MV
9.	Any Other Business	All

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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose is to welcome Board members and make introductions.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Note the apologies received.

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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose is for Board Members to declare any disclosable pecuniary and/or non-pecuniary interests.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Note the declarations of interest.

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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD HELD ON 24 APRIL 2026
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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose is to give an overview of the previous Board meeting (held 24 April 2026), as agreed by the Board.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Note the previous minutes.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Minutes of Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board (24 April 2026)

Appendix 1 – Minutes of Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board (24 April 2026)



Minutes of Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board

Friday 24 April 2026

Invitees			
Name	Initials	Role	Organisation
Board Members			
Chris Hickey	CH	Chair	Mercury Hampton
David Baines MP	DB	Member of Parliament, St Helens North	Member of Parliament, St Helens North
Councillor Anthony Burns	AB	Leader of the Council	St Helens Borough Council
Councillor Kate Groucutt	KG	Cabinet Member for Business & Inclusive Growth and Deputy Leader	St Helens Borough Council
Natalie Carroll (maternity cover for Amie Parsonage)	NC	Portfolio and Partnerships Officer	Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner
Ian Lewis	IL	Investment Manager	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Community & Co-Opted Board Members			
Alex Myhill	AM	Community Representative	Willow & Ram
Joanne Edge	JE	Community Representative	Newton Sports Club
Debbie Taylor	DT	Business Representative	Es Paradis Salon & Domestic Abuse WA12 CIC
Fiona Ruddy	FR	Third Sector Representative	Newton Community Centre
John Unsworth	JU	Cultural, Arts, and Heritage including Sports Groups Representative	Sea Cadet Corps
Reverend Chris Stafford	CS	Faith Representative	Team Rector at St Peters, Emmanuel Wargrave, and St John's
Catherine Twist	CT	Education and Opportunity Representative	Independent Member for Admissions and Exclusion appeal in St Helens
Claire Glover	CG	Health and Wellbeing Representative	Operations Manager at St Helens Wellbeing Service (CHCP)
Local Authority Representatives			
Matthew Valentine	MV	Programme Lead	St Helens Borough Council
Rachel Bebbby	RB	Project Officer	St Helens Borough Council

Glenn Taggart	GT	Project Manager	St Helens Borough Council
Donna Wilby	DW	Finance Business Partner - Regeneration	St Helens Borough Council
Apologies Received			
Jon Julian Smith	JJS	Chief Inspector, St Helens	Merseyside Police
Mark Palethorpe	MP	Chief Executive	St Helens Borough Council
Paul Romanko	PR	Business Representative	United Utilities Water Ltd

Item	Title	Lead
1.	Welcome and Introductions	CH
2.	Declarations of Interest	CH
3.	Minutes of the previous Neighbourhood Board meeting held on 6 March 2026	CH
4.	Board Appointments	MV
5.	Pride in Place Programme Update	MV
6	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Branding Update	MV
7	Early Delivery Projects Update	MV
8	Community Pot Approach	MV
9	Any Other Business	All

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chris Hickey (CH) welcomed the Neighbourhood Board and welcomed the following new attendees to Board:

- Natalie Carroll (NC), who is providing maternity cover for Amie Parsonage.
- Catherine Twist (CT), and Claire Glover (CG), attending their first meeting following the open application process for two additional Neighbourhood Board members.

Introductions were given around the table.

CH acknowledged apologies received from:

- Mark Palethorpe, Jon Julian Smith and Paul Romanko.

CH extended a thank you to Councillor Kate Groucutt, as this will be her last Neighbourhood Board meeting following her decision to stand down from her role as a Councillor.

CH informed the Board of the meeting etiquette, including details of how the Chair would run the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interest

CH informed members that no declarations had been received ahead of the meeting and invited Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Members to present any new declarations relevant to the agenda items. No declarations were declared.

3. Minutes of the previous Neighbourhood Board meeting held on 6 March 2026

CH reminded the Board that minutes from the previous Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board meeting on 6 March 2026 have been agreed and are live on the St Helens Borough Council (SHBC) website. An overview of the key discussions and endorsements were provided, including:

- The formation of a Branding Sub-Group and endorsement of the appointment of local branding specialist, Notch Digital Marketing, to create a logo for the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board.
- Noting of the progress and approach for the recruitment of two Neighbourhood Board representatives, one from an 'Education and Opportunity' background and one from a 'Health and Wellbeing' background.
- Endorsement of the proposed governance arrangements for the formation of Sub-Groups when required.
- Noting of the contents of the revised 'Pride in Place' prospectus, replacing the previous Plan for Neighbourhoods programme prospectus.
- Endorsement of the adoption of the new 'Pride in Place' programme name, in alignment with Government prospectus.

4. Board Appointments

CH noted the appointment to the 'Health and Wellbeing' and 'Education and Opportunity' positions to the Neighbourhood Board.

Matthew Valentine (MV) provided an update on the process and appointment as follows:

- 10 March 2026 – Nominations were sought through a public advertisement and emails circulated to Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board, senior internal officers, and Ward Councillors.
- 2 April 2026 - nominations and applications were reviewed by the Neighbourhood Board Chair, Chris Hickey, in consultation with the Member of Parliament for St Helens North, David Baines. A shortlist of candidate(s) for each position was developed.
- 24 April 2026 - the two successful applicants attended their first meeting.

A Neighbourhood Board member enquired as to how many applications were received. MV confirmed 17 applications were received through public recruitment or via nomination. CH added it was the longest list of applicants to review for the Neighbourhood Board positions to date. Board members noted the positive interest from the community in the programme.

Board discussed whether unsuccessful applicants could be invited to participate in Sub-Group activities. MV added that applicants who were unsuccessful have received a letter detailing that there may be further opportunities, through advisory Sub-Groups, and that the Council would retain their details if any advisory roles became available which align to their respective skillsets. It was also noted that if unsuccessful applicants did not want their details retained on file, to write to the Project Team.

NOTE: Full Neighbourhood Board noted the appointment of the ‘Health and Wellbeing’ and ‘Education and Opportunity’ representatives to the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board.

5. Pride in Place Programme Update

CH detailed that this agenda item will provide an overview of communications received from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), following submission of the Regeneration Plan, release of monitoring guidance and the request for approval of the submission of the initial monitoring return for the Newton-le-Willows Pride in Place programme.

MV outlined the following:

- 27 November 2025 - Submission of the Newton-le-Willows Regeneration Plan ahead of the 28 November 2025 deadline.
- 23 March 2026 - the Project Team received positive correspondence, from MHCLG, that the Newton-le-Willows Regeneration Plan had received full approval, with no amendments required.
- 30 April 2026 - The Project Team received the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which was signed and returned to MHCLG, with the Council expecting to be in receipt of the initial tranche of delivery funding on 30 April 2026. MV provided Neighbourhood Board with a reminder that the Year 1 funding allocation is £591,640, with a split of £360,000 capital funding and £231,640 revenue funding.
- 18 March 2026 – Cabinet endorsed the three ‘early delivery projects’ for Year 1 of the programme, and the Building Improvement Programme for Earlestown Town centre, which will be delivered within Year 2 to Year 4 of the programme following previous Board approval.

MV confirmed the monitoring guidance was released on 2 March 2026, with the first Neighbourhood Board monitoring submission required to be submitted by 30 April 2026. Appendix 1 within the Board pack contains the draft monitoring submission for the Neighbourhood Board’s endorsement.

The monitoring return submission contains the reporting as follows:

- Capacity funding activities.
- Projects delivered using programme funding (not required on the first monitoring return due to the delivery of projects beginning in April 2026).
- Projects planned which will draw upon programme funding.
- Neighbourhood Board details.
- Forecast capacity funding spend.
- Outputs.

CH asked Neighbourhood Board members to vote on the endorsement of the draft monitoring submission in Appendix 1 of the agenda pack, which this was passed unanimously.

NOTE: Full Neighbourhood Board noted the approval of the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board's Regeneration Plan, following review from MHCLG.

DECISION: Full Neighbourhood Board endorsed the draft monitoring report in Appendix 1, as the first monitoring return submission for the Newton-le-Willows Pride in Place programme.

6. Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Branding Update

CH introduced the item to request Neighbourhood Board endorsement to adopt a logo, created for the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board.

MV outlined that on the 6 March 2026 Neighbourhood Board meeting, the Neighbourhood Board agreed to appoint Notch Digital Marketing to develop a logo that will provide the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board a cohesive and distinctive brand.

An update was provided of the diligent sub Branding Sub-Group work, via a series of workshops and detailed conversations with Notch Digital Marketing, to ensure the logo presented today meets the scope provided and reflects the heritage of Newton-le-Willows.

The Branding Sub-Group were invited to provide any feedback to the Neighbourhood Board, with a Sub-Group member detailing they are very happy with the logo presented today and the recognisable aspects included making the logo unique to Newton-le-Willows.

Board reviewed the various versions of the logo, and a discussion was held around accessibility (which was included in the scope of works). The Branding Sub-Group noted this when discussing colour palettes and fonts.

CH asked Neighbourhood Board members to vote on endorsement of the draft Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board logo in Appendix 1 of the agenda pack, and this was passed unanimously.

DECISION: Full Neighbourhood Board endorsed the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board logo in Appendix 1, to be used in communications alongside the Council and funders logo, in accordance with the Council's branding guidelines.

7. Early Delivery Projects Update

CH introduced this item on the progress made in the delivery of 'early delivery projects' for Year 1 of the programme.

Updates were provided as follows:

St Johns Playground

The key update is that consultation with the community will commence from May 2026, for up to four weeks with local young people to understand the preferred

theme for the playground and equipment. It will also include an online survey made available via the Council website.

Following community consultation, the planning process will commence, ahead of procurement via the Council's Procurement Specialists, STAR Procurement, ensuring compliance. The project is expected to be completed in Winter 2026.

Board agreed this is a key need for the local community, asking if there were any opportunity to add outdoor gyms to the project. MV responded that this can be raised with the delivery team, but the Neighbourhood Board have allocated a set amount of money to the project to date, which was informed by a draft scope of works. A focus of the project is to have accessible play equipment, in addition to the access paths being improved to provide better access to the playground.

Earlestown Town Hall AV and Lighting

Procurement is expected to commence imminently, with the equipment installation to take place in Autumn 2026 following the main construction contract completion.

Further match funding has been provided by the Council via enabling works, increasing the value of the project.

Neighbourhood Board members asked if the Neighbourhood Board logo can be referenced anywhere within the Town Hall, with the Programme Lead advising that there is a wider discussion required for all projects, on how the Neighbourhood Board logo is used through promotional materials such as videos, and longer-term opportunities for use via hoardings, plaques etc.

Arts on Prescription

The Neighbourhood Board funded project will be a trial of a Newton-le-Willows focused programme, due to previous data identifying that Newton-le-Willows residents found the location of the St Helens based service a barrier to participation.

From May 2026 onwards, the delivery team are engaging with referral partners to identify participants, and hosting taster sessions for the first cohort in Spring 2026. Rachel Bebbby (RB) added that if there were any organisations the Neighbourhood Board would like to be reached and approached via the programme, to advise the Project Team.

Neighbourhood Board Members added this is a creative way to improve mental health wellbeing, with other successful services acknowledged, which utilise similar activities such as film making. The Board were keen to see the progress on this programme, and how this could have potential to be self-sustaining beyond the lifespan of the Neighbourhood Board funded delivery.

8. Community Pot Approach

CH introduced the item on the proposed approach to the 'Community Pot' grant scheme, and to request endorsement for a pilot scheme developed for Year 1 of the programme.

A background was provided by the Programme Lead, that a £250,000 allocation to enable a grant fund for community projects across the next four years (the 'Community Pot'), was endorsed as part of the Regeneration Plan at the Neighbourhood Board meeting of 3 October 2025. MV reminded Neighbourhood Board that the below grant allocations are approved:

- £25,000 in Year 1 (from April 2026 – March 2027)
- £75,000 in Year 2 (from April 2027 – March 2028)
- £75,000 in Year 3 (from April 2028 – March 2029)
- £75,000 in Year 4 (from April 2029 – March 2030)

An Internal Delivery Model for Year 1, led by the Council was previously approved, with review on the proposed approach upon Year 1 completion. Neighbourhood Board may then decide on the merits of external support for this theme from Year 2 onwards when the pot size increases and additional management is required. This could be funded via the capacity funding allocation.

MV gave an overview of the two proposed grant pots available:

- **Micro grants from £500 up to £1,000 per project** - specifically aimed at those projects that support or extend the daily running of a project, for example training, group activities, events and running costs.
- **Grow grants from £1,000 up to £5,000 per project** - specifically aimed at projects such as purchasing, renovating, or improving physical assets that serve a local area, rather than day-to-day running costs. Within the £5,000 grant limit, a maximum allocation of £1,000 of Micro grant funding can be included.

An overview of timescales was provided as follows:

- May 2026 - first round of applications expected to open
- Mid-June 2026 - application window closing
- July 2026 - decision on grant award via Neighbourhood Board endorsement

A review panel will be formed (comprising Council Officers and Newton-le-Willows Board members, ensuring compliance and community voice) to assess applications. These will then be presented to Neighbourhood Board.

Donna Wilby (DW) provided a brief finance update reminding that the Council will require appropriate evidence as accountable body, to ensure that any items funded comply with the accounting requirement classifications.

If the lower value is to be met for both the micro grants and grow grants, the Neighbourhood Board could fund up to thirty-four projects in Year 1 of the Community Pot programme.

Board Members asked if the grant forms would be the same for both grant pots and wanted to ensure smaller organisations were not excluded. A further discussion took place about the value of thresholds, and it was confirmed there will be a singular application form to simplify the application process. The Programme Lead reminded

the Neighbourhood Board that this approach is for Year 1 only, with review to follow as the grant allocation increases from Year 2 onwards.

Key learnings were shared from the Ward Member Grant Scheme.

Board Members asked for the eligibility criteria under 3.10 to be reviewed to provide flexibility and eligibility for those who are either based in or deliver projects within Newton-le-Willows (this was agreed).

Board Members requested a workshop to build engagement with the eligible community organisations and address enquiries about the Community Pot. This will be incorporated into the application process and provide a drop-in session for eligible organisations to attend, providing transparency to the local community around the parameters and administration of the Community Pot.

Neighbourhood Board Members also requested that the list of eligible projects were reordered, so that the cohesion investment themes that meet the cohesion aims of the Community Pot are clearly shown. Other themes met will also be provided but ordered by theme. A discussion also took place on what eligible projects may look like, with an ask for examples to be included. It was stated to the Neighbourhood Board that there will be a guidance document which will detail the difference between revenue and capital funding, with examples included, alongside a term of conditions document and the application form. Board Members requested sight of documentation prior to release, with the Project Team to issue this through the appropriate channels.

A discussion took place around monitoring, with MV stating quotes will be obtained including receipts, photos as evidence of delivery and ensuring that applicants understand that the project details and organisation may be used for publicity purposes.

Neighbourhood Board Members noted that any Neighbourhood Board Member who is submitting on behalf of (or has direct or indirect links to) an organisation bidding for the community grant pot, must declare an interest and they will not be eligible to join the review panel process, to ensure conflicts of interest are managed. Board Members recognised that this may exclude some members of the Neighbourhood Board.

The Programme Lead confirmed that it is critical that those applying or have direct/indirect links to those applying are completely uninvolved in assessment criteria or review of applications, to ensure there is full transparency and conflicts of interest are managed.

Board members noted that the position of Board members in having information that the Grant scheme will be available, is a privileged position and this must be noted in line with the Terms of Reference of the Board. Those who are eligible will follow usual procedure in alignment with other grant pots.

It was added that if Neighbourhood Board members want to share their expertise of grants that they can support the Project Team in hosting the drop-in session for community organisations and community interest companies.

A recommendation was given to endorse the proposed approach for the Community Pot, subject to accountable body approvals, as a pilot for Year 1 of the programme (April 2026- March 2027), with review of the delivery mechanism on completion. This was agreed by Board, with the below notes/actions to be complete.

NOTE: Eligibility criteria under 3.10 to be reviewed and to provide flexibility and eligibility for those who are either based in or deliver projects within Newton-le-Willows.

ACTION: The Project Team to provide a drop-in session for eligible organisations who could apply for the Community Pot.

ACTION: Project Team to issue appropriate Community Pot documentation to note, prior to release.

NOTE: Neighbourhood Board members to support the Project Team in the drop-in session for eligible organisations who could apply for the Community Pot.

9. Any Other Business

CH thanked Neighbourhood Board members for their contributions and invited any other business.

RB updated that the Delivery Manager for the Liverpool City Region at Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) will be attending an upcoming Board meeting.

RB updated that the formation of Sub-Groups will take place in alignment to the Investment Themes as below, following the endorsement of the approach to Sub-Groups at the last Neighbourhood Board meeting of 6 March 2026:

- Regeneration, High Streets and Heritage Sub-Group
- Health and Education Sub-Group
- Community Pot Review Panel

MV added that Expression of Interest Forms will be circulated to Neighbourhood Board Members, with the formed Sub-Groups to then decide if external expertise is required to supplement the sitting Board members. Neighbourhood Board Members requested workshops to be provided to the sub-groups from those who have data led evidence of need and can provide information on where funding allocations can be spent, which supports prior public consultation.

RB added that a video is being produced by the Council's Communication Team, featuring Neighbourhood Board Members presenting the three 'early delivery projects and the Community Pot.

Lastly, CH provided a thanks to Councillor Kate Groucutt for attending and inputting into the development of Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board.

NOTE: Data workshops to take place on Investment Themes.

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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Change in Board Membership
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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Neighbourhood Board of a change to the Council Leader following local elections, and therefore resultant changes to Board membership.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Note the change in the Leader of the Council following local elections and resulting change in Board membership.**

3. Background

- 3.1. Following the local elections on 7 May 2026, results saw Reform UK appointed as the ruling political party for St Helens Borough. Accordingly, at Annual Council on 20 May 2026, councillors formally approved the new political leadership for the Council with Councillor George Woodward appointed as Leader of the Council.
- 3.2. In May 2026, at the Annual Council meeting, it was agreed that the Leader of the Council would sit on the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board, with no further political positions appointed at this time.
- 3.3. In accordance with the extant Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Board, the Leader of the Council occupies a position within the Neighbourhood Board. For clarity, it is the postholder of this position that occupies a seat on the Neighbourhood Board rather than the individual themselves. Consequently, the Leader of the Council (Councillor George Woodward) will now occupy his respective position within the Neighbourhood Board, replacing Anthony Burns.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The change in Board membership as a result of changes to personnel in the role of Leader of the Council is made in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board.

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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Community Pot Outcomes
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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. The purpose is to advise the Neighbourhood Board of the progress made in the awarding of community organisations and not for profit organisations following the application window closing on 5 July 2026.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Note the progress relating to the Year 1 Community Pot application window.**
- 2) Note the establishment of the Community Pot Review Panel for Year 1 of the programme.**
- 3) Endorse the recommended projects contained in Appendix 1, following an assessment completed by the Community Pot Review Panel.**

3. Background

- 3.1. At the Neighbourhood Board meeting of 24 April 2026, Board Members endorsed the proposed approach for the Community Pot, as a pilot for Year 1 of the programme (April 2026 - March 2027), with review of the delivery mechanism on completion. Neighbourhood Board Members comments were then taken into consideration and built into the wider development of the programme documents.
- 3.2. A Review Panel was formed comprising a mix of Council Officers and Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board members, to ensure compliance in relation to the Council's role as the accountable body, whilst ensuring there is a key community voice and aspect to developing documentation, scoring criteria and reviewing the proposals.
- 3.3. Accordingly, the Project Team launched the Community Pot via a dedicated [webpage](#) on Monday 1 June 2026 for a period of approximately 5 weeks, up until 23:59 on 5 July 2026. A dedicated email address was also published to capture applications and liaise with applicants.

3.4. Running alongside the application window was a series of communications targeted for specific stakeholders, alongside public communications. Engagement events and activities undertaken by both the Council and Neighbourhood Board are detailed below:

- Press release – 1 June 2026
- Social media releases
- Targeted online flyer distribution to key stakeholders and local organisations - date
- Online resident's newsletter email – 5 June 2026
- All About Us – Council staff newsletter – 4 June 2026
- Halton & St Helens VCA E-Bulletin
- In-person presentation at Halton & St Helens VCA Forum – 8 June 2026 10:00-11:00am (community organisations)
- In-person drop-in event at Newton-le-Willows Library – 8 June 2026 5:00pm-6:30pm (public)
- Dedicated Community Pot video released on social media

3.5. In total, the Council's Project Team, via the dedicated email address, received 24 applications from 24 community organisations or not for profits, with a total ask of £42,724.55 capital (associated with the Grow Grants) and £31,414.75 revenue (associated with the Micro Grants).

3.6. The Review Panel assessed each bid in alignment with the application form, before recommending the eligible projects to take forward for Neighbourhood Board's endorsement - see Appendix 1. The scoring weighting was as follows:

- Outcomes of Project (Community Benefits) - 50%
- Sustainability/Match Funding - 10%
- Project Management - 20%
- Budget & Cost Realism - 20%

4. Conclusion

4.1 The Community Pot application windows was opened on 1 June 2026, closing on 5 July 2026. With a comprehensive programme of engagement, the Community Pot received 24 applications, with a total of £24,666.30 proposed for allocation to projects following assessment by the Community Pot Review Panel.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Community Pot Application Outcomes - redacted from publication under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act Section 3

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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Building Improvement Programme
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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to advise Board on the development of a Building Improvement Programme for the Earlestown Conservation Area following the formation of the Regeneration, Heritage & High Streets Sub-Group and subsequent workshops that have been held to develop the initial framework for the Building Improvement Programme.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Note the progress relating to the development of a Building Improvement Programme for Earlestown.**
- 2) Endorse the proposed Programme Framework, including eligibility criteria, scope of eligible works, assessment criteria, associated scoring matrix, and grant contribution approach, to enable the development of the full Programme Documentation Pack to be presented to the Neighbourhood Board in October 2026.**
- 3) Endorse the phased engagement approach with businesses and property owners within the Building Improvement Programme geographical boundaries.**
- 4) Note the proposed programme delivery milestones and next steps, including the submission of the full Programme Documentation Pack to the Neighbourhood Board in October 2026 for further approval.**

3. Background

- 3.1. At its meeting of 18 July 2025, the Neighbourhood Board endorsed the findings of the public consultation, which identified Regeneration, High Streets & Heritage as the highest priority investment theme. Feedback received from public consultation and resulting Board correspondence highlighted a clear need for improvements to the quality and appearance of the built environment,

particularly within the Earlestown Conservation Area, including shopfront enhancements and increased diversity of uses.

- 3.2. At a Neighbourhood Board workshop on 8 January 2026, Neighbourhood Board Members were provided with an overview of how the Earlestown Building Improvement Programme could be developed, informed by case studies from similar programmes located in Tyldesley and Southport.
- 3.3. At its Board meeting of 16 January 2026, the Neighbourhood Board endorsed the progression of a Building Improvement Programme for Earlestown, including the proposed management approach and a funding allocation of £1.2 million (comprising both capital and revenue management costs).
- 3.4. Furthermore, at its meeting of 6 March 2026, the Neighbourhood Board endorsed the formation of Investment Theme Sub-Groups to act as Task and Finish Groups for specific and appropriate elements of the Board's business.
- 3.5. The Regeneration, High Streets & Heritage Sub-Group has subsequently been engaged, through a series of workshops held on 17 June 2026 and 2 July 2026, to refine the key components of the Building Improvement Programme. This includes eligibility criteria, assessment framework, contribution rate, clawback provisions, exclusions and engagement approach.
- 3.6. Resulting from this process, an emerging programme structure has been developed, reflecting the Board's priorities and the desire to target investment to maximise townscape impact and support long standing and independent businesses.

Overview

- 3.7. Following endorsement by the Neighbourhood Board at its meeting of 16 January 2026, the development of the Building Improvement Programme has been guided by the endorsed key objectives:
 - Boost Economic Activity – by attracting more footfall and revenue through new/enhanced retail spaces and hospitality venues;
 - Improve Connectivity – supporting the wider regeneration efforts in Earlestown which aim to enhance connectivity between the Rail Station, Town Hall and Market Square; and
 - Support Local Businesses – provide grant funding to independent businesses/landlords to improve their facilities and spaces for local enterprises to thrive.
- 3.8. In delivering against these objectives, the programme seeks to achieve the following strategic outcomes:
 - Diversification – broadening the mix of uses within the town centre;

- Reduction in Vacancy Rates – bringing vacant properties back into active use;
- Heritage Enhancement – reinstating and improving historic building features where appropriate;
- Gateway Improvements – enhancing the quality and appearance of key arrival points;
- Local Economic Growth – supporting business sustainability and creating employment opportunities;
- Safety Improvements – contributing to a reduction in anti-social behaviour through active use and improved frontages; and
- Community Cohesion – strengthening relationships between stakeholders and fostering local pride.

3.9. To support the delivery of these objectives and outcomes, a structured Programme Framework has been developed through Sub-Group engagement and Council Officer expertise. The key components of the proposed Programme are set out below.

Eligible Works

3.10. Eligibility criteria determine whether an application can be considered by the appointed Neighbourhood Board Assessment Panel. Any application must meet the eligibility requirements for the programme to progress to assessment against the programme's assessment criteria. Establishing clear eligibility parameters is therefore essential to ensuring funding is directed towards projects which align with the objectives of the Building Improvement Programme and Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Regeneration Plan.

3.11. To be considered eligible, applications must meet the following requirements:

- Location
The property must be located within the Earlestown Conservation Area boundary
- Applicant
Applications must be submitted by the property owner or a long leaseholder (with a minimum of five years remaining on the lease) and leaseholders may apply in partnership with the property owner;
- Planning Requirements
Where required, planning permission and/or relevant consents must be secured prior to application
- Application Completeness
Only fully completed applications, supported by the required documentation, will be considered

- 3.12. Eligible works under the programme will focus on the repair, restoration and enhancement of buildings, with an emphasis on improving townscape quality and reinstating architectural character. Eligible costs will include:
- Repair works to buildings - external repairs and associated structural works to improve the condition of the building fabric
 - Reinstatement and Restoration of Architectural Features – including the repair or reinstatement of historic elements and traditional shopfront features
 - Professional Fees – costs associated with the design, specification and delivery of works (where appropriate)
 - Preliminaries – site setup and associated project costs required to deliver the works
 - Contingency – a proportionate allowance to manage unforeseen costs
- 3.13. The Regeneration, High Streets & Heritage Sub-Group are not proposing any specific planning ‘use class’ exclusions; however, concerns raised through early workshops with the Neighbourhood Board will be addressed through the Assessment Criteria Framework. The Assessment Framework and Scoring Matrix, aligned to the Neighbourhood Board’s priorities, will act as the primary mechanism for directing funding towards the most appropriate property uses, thereby limiting the need for a wider range of exclusions.
- 3.14. The eligibility criteria and scope of eligible works will be set out in further detail within the full Programme Documentation Pack, ensuring clear guidance will be provided to applicants via engagement in early 2027, in advance of the application process. This programme pack will be developed and presented to the Board in October 2026 for endorsement.

Contribution Rate

- 3.15. At its meeting of 16 January 2026, the Neighbourhood Board endorsed a tiered funding approach for the Building Improvement Programme. This approach is intended to incentivise early engagement, build momentum and enable visible improvements to be delivered at pace in the initial phase of the programme.
- 3.16. Following discussion at Regeneration, High Streets & Heritage Sub-Group meetings, it is proposed that the grant contribution rate will be set as follows:
- Year 1 – up to 85% grant contribution
 - Years 2 and 3 – up to 75% grant contribution
- 3.17. The applicable contribution rate will be fixed at the point of application, providing certainty to applicants and enabling effective financial planning.

- 3.18. In addition to the percentage contribution, it is proposed that a maximum grant cap of £100,000 per property is applied. This reflects benchmarking against comparable schemes and allows for inflationary costs, where typical project costs for properties of a similar scale range between £50,000 and £70,000, with the proposed cap also allowing for inclusion of preliminaries, professional fees and contingencies. Additionally, as an identified primary priority was to fund buildings in poor condition, this cap allows for a greater scope of works within this priority. The introduction of a cap will ensure that funding is distributed equitably across the programme and enables support for a greater number of properties.
- 3.19. To ensure appropriate flexibility in programme delivery, it is proposed that the Neighbourhood Board retains the right to review and adjust contribution rates, subject to programme performance and formal approval. This provision will be set out within the programme guidance.
- 3.20. Grant funding will be claimed in arrears, with applicants required to complete the approved works prior to submitting a claim for reimbursement. This approach ensures that public funding is released only upon satisfactory completion of works and will be administered in accordance with the terms set out in the Grant Funding Agreement.
- 3.21. A three-year clawback provision will be included in Grant Funding Agreements. This will enable the Neighbourhood Board to recover funding, on a proportionate basis, in the event that a property is sold within three years of the completion of works. This measure is intended to safeguard public investment and discourage short-term gain.
- 3.22. The detailed terms relating to grant payment, clawback and monitoring requirements will be set out within the Grant Funding Agreement, which will be presented to the Board in October 2026 for endorsement as part of the full Programme Documentation Pack.

Assessment Criteria

- 3.23. Following confirmation that an application meets the eligibility requirements, it will be assessed against a structured set of criteria to determine its priority for funding. The Assessment Framework has been designed to ensure that investment is directed towards projects which deliver the greatest impact against the objectives of the Building Improvement Programme and Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Regeneration Plan.
- 3.24. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:
- Heritage Significance – the historic importance of the building and its contribution to the Conservation Area;

- Architectural Merit – the quality and character of the building’s design and features;
- Value for Money – the extent to which the proposed works represent effective use of funding;
- Condition – the current state of repair, with buildings in poorer condition receiving a higher priority;
- Regeneration Potential – the extent to which the project contributes to wider regeneration objectives, including clustering with other funded properties;
- Townscape Impact – the prominence of the building and its contribution to the wider street scene, with landmark and highly visible properties prioritised;
- Occupancy – the current use of the property, with vacant units receiving higher priority;
- Residential Use – commitment to the introduction or enhancement of residential use, particularly at upper floor level;
- Business Type – prioritisation of uses which support a vibrant and diverse town centre, including evening economy uses such as cafés, bars and restaurants, followed by retail, with lower priority given to uses such as takeaways and similar; and
- Support for Independent and Long-standing Businesses – recognising the role of established and independent businesses in supporting local economic resilience and character.

3.25. Each application is proposed to be scored against the criteria listed above, using a detailed Assessment Matrix (see Appendix 1). The proposed matrix applies a system of weighted multipliers, typically ranging between 1 and 3, to reflect the Neighbourhood Board’s priorities, while avoiding disproportionate influence from any single criterion.

3.26. The primary priorities identified by the Sub-Group that align with the programme objectives and strategic outcomes are:

- Townscape Impact
- Support for Independent and Long-standing Businesses
- Building Condition

3.27. The secondary priorities identified by the Sub-group that align with the programme objectives and strategic outcomes are:

- Heritage Significance
- Architectural Merit
- Occupancy
- Business Type

- 3.28. The priority areas listed above will carry greater influence within the overall scoring framework, ensuring that funding is targeted towards projects with the greatest visible and economic impact, in alignment with the Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board's Regeneration Plan objectives.
- 3.29. In addition, a location-based multiplier is proposed, whereby applications within identified priority areas will receive an uplift in their overall score. A multiplier of 1.2 would be applied to properties located within the defined priority streets that include Stanley Street, Oxford Street, Bridge Street and Market Street (between Stanley Street and Bridge Street), as previously endorsed by the Neighbourhood Board.
- 3.30. This structured approach ensures a transparent, consistent and robust method of assessment, enabling the Neighbourhood Board to prioritise investment effectively, whilst aligning funding decisions with the strategic objectives of the Programme.

Engagement Approach

- 3.31. A phased engagement approach is proposed to support the successful implementation of the Building Improvement Programme. Early engagement will play a key role in building momentum, raising awareness and ensuring a strong pipeline of high-quality applications aligned with the Neighbourhood Board's priorities.
- 3.32. Phase 1: Early Engagement (July–August 2026) will focus on awareness raising and pipeline development. This phase will be delivered through direct communication with businesses and property owners, alongside town centre drop-in sessions.
- 3.33. Engagement during this phase will focus on:
- Providing high-level grant information;
 - Outlining the programme timeline for delivery;
 - Communicating the Neighbourhood Board's priorities and intended outcomes; and
 - Highlighting any endorsed exclusions.
- 3.34. The primary aim of early engagement is to gather feedback from businesses and property owners, build a rapport and understand initial interest, enabling identification of a potential project pipeline, whilst supporting development of the programme document pack.
- 3.35. To support clarity for prospective applicants, a process flowchart (see Appendix 2) has been developed which outlines the end-to-end journey from Expression of Interest submission through to grant award and project delivery.

This will form part of the Phase 1 engagement and will be used as a key communication tool throughout the application process.

- 3.36. Phase 2 – Programme Development (January 2027 onwards) will focus on supporting applicants to develop high-quality proposals and progress towards application. This phase will include the formal launch of the Expression of Interest (Eoi) process, supported by targeted workshops and continued town centre engagement.

Programme Timelines

- 3.37. The following information outlines the key milestones for the development and delivery of the Building Improvement Programme:

- 3.38. July – September 2026, Early Engagement and Programme Development:

- Delivery of Phase 1 engagement activity;
- Development of the Grant Funding Agreement and supporting programme documentation; and
- Ongoing Sub-group input to refine programme details

- 3.39. October 2026, Programme Document Pack:

- Submission of full Programme Documentation Pack to the Neighbourhood Board for approval (October 2026)

- 3.40. January – April 2027, Soft Launch and Applicant Development:

- Delivery of Phase 2 engagement activity;
- Launch of the Expression of Interest (Eoi) process; and
- Workshops and support for prospective applicants

- 3.41. April 2027 – April 2030, Full Launch and Delivery:

- Opening of the full grant application process;
- Assessment of applications; and
- Approval of grants and commencement of project delivery

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The proposed Building Improvement Programme provides a clear and structured approach to delivering targeted investment within the Earlestown Conservation Area. The Programme Framework set out in this report reflects the Neighbourhood Board's priorities and establishes a robust basis for implementation, engagement and further development, subject to further Neighbourhood Board endorsements.

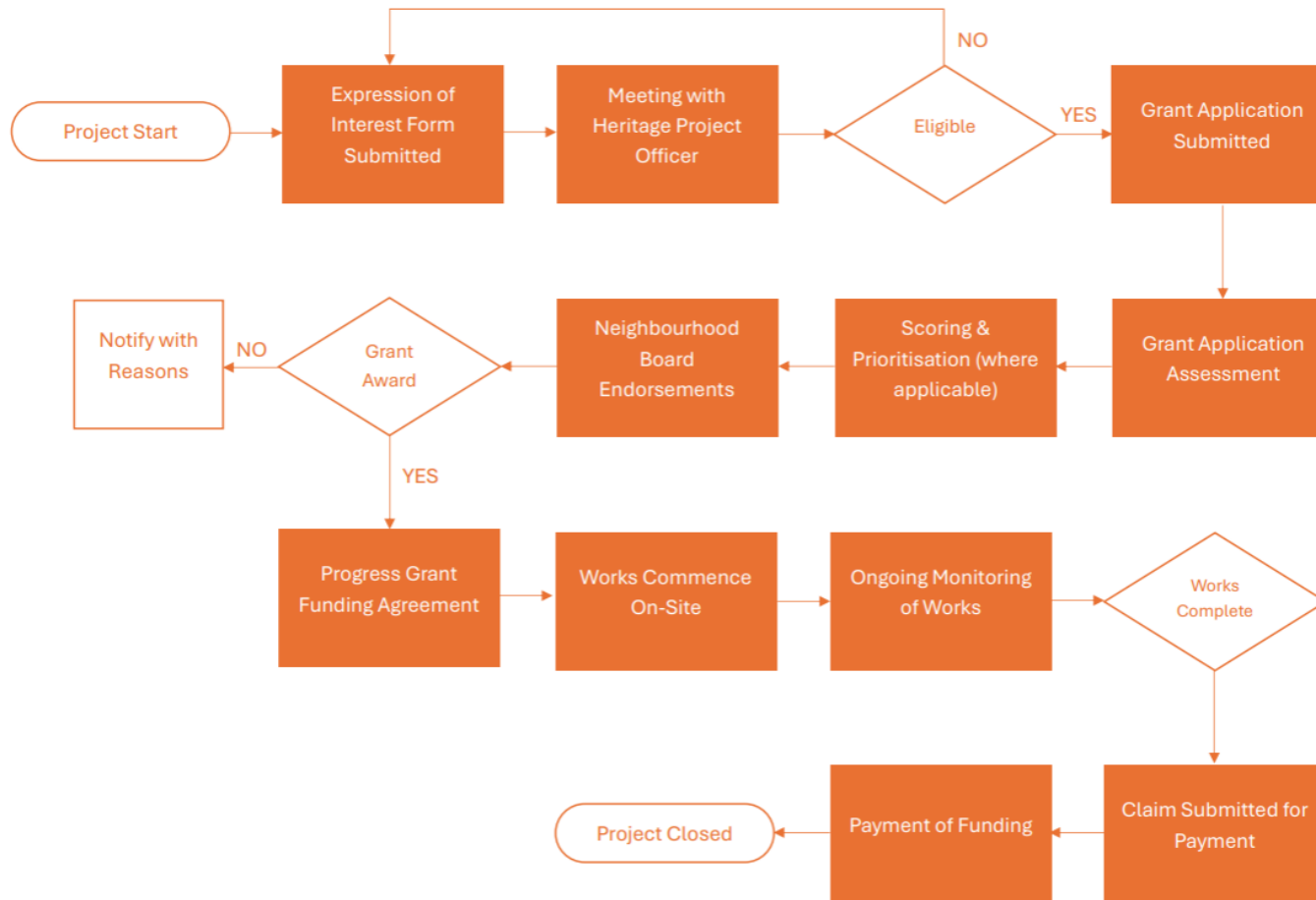
Appendix 1: Assessment criteria matrix

Please note, the assessment criteria matrix is for indicative purposes only and the full detail is subject to further development.

Criteria	Score (a)	Multiplier (b)	Total (a x b)
Heritage Significance Historic importance of the building and its contribution to the Conservation Area 1 = Limited 2 = Medium 3 = High		X2	
Architectural Merit Quality and character of the building's design and features 1 = Limited 2 = Medium 3 = High		X2	
Value for Money (cost per sqm) Extent to which the proposed works represent effective use of funding 1 = £650 + per sqm 2 = £350 - £650 per sqm 3 = £0- £350 per sqm		X1	
Condition Current state of repair 1 = Good 2 = Average 3 = Poor		X3	
Townscape Impact Prominence of the building and its contribution to the wider street scene, with landmark and highly visible properties prioritised. 1 = Low 2 = Medium		X3	

3 = High			
Vacant Floorspace Brought Back into Use (Retail) 1 = 0-50m ² 2 = 50-100m ² 3 = 100-500m ²		X2	
Upper Floorspace Converted into Residential Use 1 = 0-50m ² 2 = 50-100m ² 3 = 100-500m ²		X1	
Regeneration Potential Extent to which the project contributes to wider regeneration objectives, including clustering with other funded properties 1 = Limited 2 = Medium 3 = High		X1	
Independent & Long-Standing Businesses Recognising the role of established and independent businesses 1 = Vacant / Chain / National Retailer 2 = Independent (1 - 3 years) 3 = Independent (3 years +)		X3	
Business Type Prioritisation of uses which support a vibrant and diverse town centre 1 = Low priority 2 = Medium priority 3 = High priority		X2	
		Subtotal	
Priority Weighting	Priority Area x 1.2 Non-priority Area x 1	Total Score	

Appendix 2: Application Process Flowchart



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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Early Delivery Projects Update
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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Neighbourhood Board on the progress made in the delivery of 'Early Delivery Projects' for Year 1 of the programme, following endorsement of the Neighbourhood Board.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) **Note the progress relating to the delivery of the endorsed 'Early Delivery Projects'.**

3. Background

- 3.1. At the Neighbourhood Board meeting of 16 January 2026, the Neighbourhood Board endorsed three 'Early Delivery Projects' to be undertaken within the funding allocations provided for Year 1 of delivery, being:

- **St Johns Playground** - £0.203m for the installation of a new playground at St Johns Park in Earlestown to replace existing equipment and create an inclusive, fully accessible recreation space for young people in the heart of the community.
- **Earlestown Town Hall AV and Lighting** - £0.134m for the installation of professional, high-quality Audio-Visual and lighting infrastructure in the main hall of Earlestown Town Hall to add further functionality and community uses beyond the restoration of the historic building into a flexible, multi-use space for the community.
- **Arts on Prescription** - £0.024m for a programme of arts and creative workshops for adults experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues such as stress, anxiety and depression, providing a creative route to wellbeing based at Newton Library.

- 3.2. Following Neighbourhood Board endorsement on 16 January 2026, and Council Cabinet approval on 18 March 2026, the Project Delivery Teams have provided the Pride in Place Project Team with further information via project initiation documents, forming the baseline and scope for project delivery.

St Johns Playground

- 3.3. Consultation activity has begun with sessions being undertaken on the dates listed below:
- 15 June 2026 – Hope Academy
 - 8 June 2026 – Newton-le-Willows Library (Parent and Baby Read and Rhyme)
 - 8 June 2026– St John’s Playground
 - 10 June 2026 – Lyme Community Primary
 - 10 June 2026 – Newton-le-Willows Health and Fitness Centre
 - 22 June 2026 – St John’s Playground
 - 24 June 2026 – St John’s Playground
 - 26 June 2026 – Newton Football Club
 - 29 June 2026 – Crownway Community Centre (Parent and Baby classes)
- 3.4. In addition, an online survey was produced and circulated, giving participants the opportunity to vote on the playground theme and the types of equipment to be included within the playground.
- 3.5. Procurement activity is also underway, with five expressions of interest from reputable contractors received, pursuant to the design, supply and install of playground equipment and associated works
- 3.6. Following the conclusion of consultation and procurement, the project will enter design stages ahead of undertaking required planning applications, prior to expansion works and replacement of equipment.

Earlestown Town Hall AV and Lighting

- 3.7. Enabling works are ongoing within Earlestown Town Hall, funded by St Helens Borough Council, to fit the required infrastructure to facilitate the function of AV and Lighting equipment.
- 3.8. Procurement activities are ongoing, with three quotes received prior and assessed against value for money and specification suitability. Procurement activity is anticipated to be finalised imminently.
- 3.9. Upon completion of the main works at Earlestown Town Hall, the successful supplier will be invited on site to conduct the installation and setup of the AV and Lighting equipment.

Arts on Prescription

- 3.10. The Pride in Place Project Team held a progress meeting with the Arts on Prescription delivery team on 03 July 2026, at which an update was provided on progression of communications and identification of participants for the programme.

- 3.11. Four taster sessions and two open days, held at Newton Library, were facilitated, prior to the first cohort of delivery. These sessions alongside marketing and communications have resulted in eighteen Expressions of Interest being received (as of the project progress meeting on 3 July 2026).
- 3.12. Of the eighteen expressions of interest, nine people have been identified as being suitable for the delivery and referred into the programme. An emphasis has been placed on the requirement to ensure that all ten positions are utilised across the first cohort.
- 3.13. The delivery team have ongoing distribution of flyers and posters locally and have planned or delivered engagement with organisations listed below, to identify further referrals to the programme:
- Social Prescribers for Newton-le-Willows
 - Newton Community Centre
 - Crownway Community Centre
 - Creative Frame Wellbeing group
 - Domestic Abuse WA12
 - St Helens Wellbeing Service
 - Andy's Man Club
 - Primary Care Network
- 3.14. Further engagement has also been held at the Live Well Community Connectors events and the Newton and Haydock PCN community action day.
- 3.15. Sessions began on 29 June 2026 for the first cohort and will run until 7 September 2026.

Newton-le-Willows Spring Clean

- 3.16. Previously identified as a potential 'early delivery project', the Newton-le-Willows Spring Clean has since developed into a Community Day style delivery model, with a centralised location and satellite areas to deliver litter picking, fly tipping clearance and other associated activities.
- 3.17. At the meeting of the Regeneration, High Streets & Heritage Sub-Group on 17 June 2026, the Sub-Group decided to defer project delivery until Spring 2027, to allow for further project development and planning to deliver a comprehensive and meaningful project in key areas across Newton-le-Willows.
- 3.18. On 2 July 2026, the project was further developed with the Regeneration, High Streets & Heritage Sub-Group identifying a potential date of 10 May 2027 for delivery of the initial Community Day.
- 3.19. Early programme ideas include a Community Day style engagement session at a centralised location with litter picking teams walking pre-determined routes. In addition, skips are to be provided to satellite locations, with

engagement to take place to include community groups in a wider clean up delivery targeting streets and fly tipping hotspots close to each location.

- 3.20. Further development is to be undertaken to build out the delivery model prior to presentation to the full Neighbourhood Board, with a request of funding allocation in October 2026.
- 3.21. The Pride in Place Project Team have been engaging with local organisations who hold Social Value contribution pots to leverage additional funding into the project and the outcome of this will be presented in due course.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 In conclusion, the endorsed 'early delivery projects' as outlined in this report remain on track to be delivered prior to March 2027 and will provide impactful and meaningful projects for Year 1 of delivery. Each project will involve wider engagement and advertising with the community of Newton-le-Willows to maximise the reach and impact of the projects.

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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Staffing Update
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1 Summary

- 1.1 This report item provides an update on the Council staffing resource for the Newton-le-Willows Pride in Place Programme.

2 Recommendations for Decision

Board is recommended to:

- 1) Note the update given to staffing of the Newton-le-Willows Pride in Place Programme.**

3 Background

- 3.1 The Plan for Neighbourhoods (previous name of the Pride in Place programme) prospectus detailed that the Neighbourhood Board can allocate a proportion of funding towards 'Management Costs' for expenses including but not limited to, a secretariat function, staff costs to support appraisal and selection of projects or other costs such as support for delivery of the programme within the community.
- 3.2 At the Neighbourhood Board meeting of 3 October 2025, the Neighbourhood Board endorsed a 6% management fee which included provision for a full-time Project Officer, a Programme Lead of one day per week, and ancillary services such as financial and legal, necessitated to undertake the Council's role as the accountable body.
- 3.3 The Management Fee was agreed to be reviewed annually, based upon Programme requirements, and such review will be undertaken and presented to the Neighbourhood Board at the October 2026 Neighbourhood Board meeting.
- 3.4 As of the Neighbourhood Board meeting on 17 July 2026, the currently allocated Project Officer of the Council will no longer be instructed to Newton-le-Willows Pride in Place, due to an opportunity arising within an alternative programme. This post will continue to be delivered in accordance with the agreed management fee through existing Council resource allocation to the full-time position.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The Council staffing of the Newton-le-Willows Pride in Place Programme will continue to meet the agreement of the previously endorsed management fee, whilst an internal resource reallocation is undertaken.

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ITEM 9

 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	Newton-le-Willows Neighbourhood Board Any Other Business
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1 Summary

- 1.1 This report item provides an opportunity for Board members to raise any other relevant business that has not been previously discussed within these papers.